

UNIT I

LEADING IN WORSHIP

Worship is an essential part of the church's nature, and it is the most important activity of a church. A church which fails to worship will become an organized structure instead of a living organism. Such a church may have many activities, but it will be lacking in vitality and life. Activities cannot take the place of relationships established in worship. A church which fails in worship will lack vision and challenge. When Isaiah went into the Temple and worshipped God, he became aware not only of the greatness of his God but also of the world-wide mission which was his responsibility. When a church worships, it becomes aware of the redemptive love of God and its privilege to share that redemptive love in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 1 presents a brief historical survey and discussion of the meaning of worship. The student is enabled to understand better the meaning of worship if he studies examples of worship in history. Old Testament methods of worship, which employed much symbolism, are fascinating and suggestive. The transition from the use of symbolic objects in Old Testament worship to the experience of worshipping in spirit and truth in the New Testament needs careful attention. The return to a greater use of objects in worship in the Middle Ages and the transition from the use of the objects as symbols to the position of adoration of the objects themselves provide important lessons.

Lesson 2 discusses the elements of worship. The student should know the purpose of each element in an order of worship. Without this understanding, he will be unable to plan effectively the use of these elements. Since the elements are symbols used in expressing relationship to God, a psychological understanding of them is important.

Lesson 3 discusses the planning of an effective worship service and makes suggestions for the pastor who leads in worship. It also presents the results of effective worship. A church is prepared for its mission only to the degree that it experiences genuine worship.

LESSON 1

THE NATURE AND HISTORY OF WORSHIP

Introduction

Aim

To gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of worship, a fuller knowledge of how men have worshipped, and a greater appreciation for the place of worship in the life of the Christian.

Thought questions

1. Why do you attend worship services?
2. What is the meaning of worship?
3. When have you worshipped?
4. Is worship primarily receiving from or giving to God?

The Nature of Worship

Introduction

The nature of worship is inseparably connected to the meaning of religion. In *Man's Religions*, Noss states:

All religions say in one way or another that man does not, and cannot, stand alone. He is vitally related with and even dependent on powers in Nature and Society external to himself. Dimly or clearly, he knows that he is not an independent center of force capable of standing apart from the world.¹

Worship is what man does in seeking acceptance by the power on which he is dependent. Worship is as old as religion, and religion is as old as the human race. The very essence of religion is dependence, and that dependence is expressed in the act of worship. Man is religious by nature, and the expression of this nature in worship is a universal activity of mankind.

Since man cannot stand alone but is dependent on a higher power, his relation to that power is of primary significance; therefore, worship is his most urgent activity. The first responsibility and most important function of the church is worship. The life of the church and every aspect of its ministry are motivated by worship.²

¹ John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, 3rd ed. (New York: The MacMillan Company; London: Collier-MacMillan Ltd., 1963), p. 2.

² The word church and a number of other words are defined in Appendix A.

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According to Noss, all religions say man cannot s _____ a _____. He is not an i _____ centre of force capable of standing apart from the world.

(stand alone, independent)

Man worships to seek acceptance by the power on which he is _____.

(dependent)

Because of his nature, what is man's most urgent activity? _____

(worship)

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Definition

The English word worship is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *weorthscipe*. This word is a combination of the two words worth and ship. After a period of time, they came to be the one word worship with the meaning of ascribing worth to a person or thing of value. To worship God is to declare His worth. In Revelation, the angels are described as singing:

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. (Rev. 5:12)

All creatures join together in shouting:

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. (Rev. 5:13-14)

In the Old Testament, the word most frequently translated worship is *shahah* ("to bow down," "to depress one's self," "to prostrate one's self"). The worshipper prostrated himself before Yahweh. *Shahah* expresses a reverential attitude of mind and body and the complete submission of the worshipper before God. This response grew out of regard for the attribute of God expressed in the term glory. When Isaiah saw the exalted Lord during the temple vision, he responded with the words, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3).

In the New Testament, *proskuneō* is used frequently for the word worship. It is a Greek word which literally means to kiss towards, to kiss the hand, or to prostrate one's self before another in token of reverence.

Another Greek word, *leitourgia*, is related to worship; it is translated ministry or service, and the word liturgy is derived from it also. This word is used to translate the Old Testament concept of the sacrificial work in which the priests ministered to the people; that is, they served the people who came to worship by offering sacrifices for them. The word appears in the New Testament with reference to the work of the priestly office under the Old Covenant (see Luke 1:23; Heb. 9:21); to the ministry of Christ (Heb. 8:6); and to the worship of the church (Acts 13:2). The word means literally to render service to the people, and it was used to refer to the service which the Christian renders to God. For Paul, the true service of God is a life of faith that shows forth fruits of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22). It appears also in Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present

The word worship means to ascribe _____
to a person or thing of _____.

To worship God is to declare His _____.

(worth, value, worth)

Shahah is an Old Testament word for worship
which means _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Proskuneō is a New Testament word for wor-
ship and means literally _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

According to Paul, worship is a life of
_____ that shows forth fruits of the
_____.

(faith, Spirit)

your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (*leitourgia*).” The Old Testament practice of worshipping through the offering of sacrificial animals was replaced in the New Testament with the offering of one’s life.

Description

“Going to church” is not the whole duty of Christian living; however, a failure to attend worship services is an indication of spiritual sickness and a perversion of values. When man proudly conceives of himself as independent of a higher power, he seeks fulfilment in life through pleasure and wealth. His life is not controlled by an awareness that he is obligated to his Creator. Happiness and success are measured in terms of physical pleasures and riches. Spiritual hunger for God results from man’s awareness that he is obligated to his Creator. This sense of obligation and dependence brings about a spiritual need for a relationship with God.

Worship as a personal relationship.—Worship is man’s attempt to approach God in a personal relationship. It may be described as (1) man’s using outward forms and acts to express reverence and gratitude to God who has acted in history to provide for his need and (2) man’s becoming aware inwardly of the presence of God and his responding in a spirit of awe by offering no less than his life.

Since man is not equal with God, his personal relationship with Him requires humility and reverence. God has expressed His love to man in deeds: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . .” (John 3:16); “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6b). Man responds to God’s love with respect, thanksgiving, adoration, and surrender to God’s will.

Worship as dialogue.—Worship as a personal relationship means there are two sides to the encounter. It is a dialogue involving *revelation* on the part of God and *response* on the part of man—divine word and human answer. Such a dialogue is demonstrated in the account of the call of Jeremiah:

Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and
before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I,
Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

But the Lord said unto me,
Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. (Jer. 1:4–7)

Read all of *Worship as a personal relationship* before doing the following exercise.

Worship is a personal relationship:

1. It is man's using outward f _____ and acts to express r _____ and g _____ to God.
2. It is man's becoming aware i _____ of the presence of God and his responding by offering his l _____.

(1. forms, reverence, gratitude; 2. inwardly, life)

Worship as dialogue involves two sides in the encounter:

Revelation on the part of _____
Response on the part of _____.

(God, man)

In this personal relationship (dialogue) between God and Jeremiah, God spoke, Jeremiah answered, and God spoke again. The reading of the Bible and the preaching of God's Word are God's revelation, and the people should be given opportunity to respond.

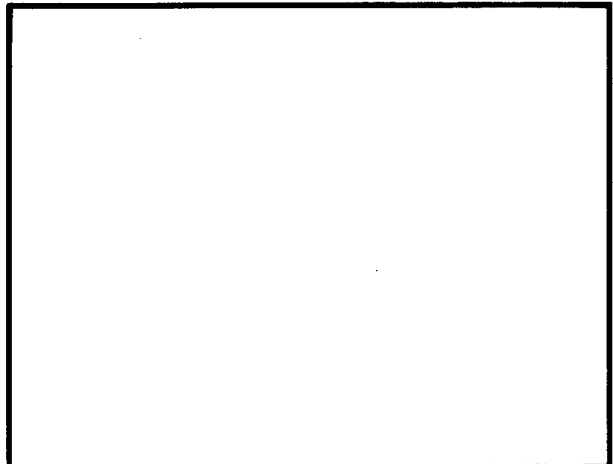
Symbols of worship.—Worship as communion is expressed often in symbols. Isaiah 6 is an illustration of symbolic communion. The prophet Isaiah envisaged the Lord sitting upon a throne which was high and lifted up. His holiness and glory were demonstrated by the cry of the seraphim, and His power was evidenced by the moving of the doorposts at His voice. Isaiah's cleansing from sin was symbolized by the live coal taken from the altar and laid on his mouth.

Symbols are used to express attitudes, feelings, and concepts. To stand shows respect; therefore, a man rises when being introduced to another person, when a lady enters the room, and when a dignitary arrives. Symbolic actions are used to express respect and humility when Christians seek to establish a personal relationship with God. The church congregation usually stands when the presence of God is acknowledged in the invocation. Most churches encourage their members to bow their heads as a symbol of humility while they speak to God in prayer. Usually the closing of one's eyes during prayer has the practical purpose of shutting out outside distractions, but it also symbolizes that relationship to God is not established in the physical realm but in the spiritual.

The internal and external nature of worship.—Worship includes both inner experiences and outward acts. What is usually referred to as "a worship service" is actually the outward acts or forms of worship. The person may repeat the forms of worship without worshipping. The inner experiences of worship include genuine gratitude and love and an awareness of God's presence (God's revealing Himself to man).

Worship extends beyond church services. It is not limited to acts of devotion, rites, and ceremonies. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul explained that the Christian worships God through dedicated service. He responds to what God has done for him by giving his life in grateful service. This attitude was expressed by Paul in the words: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

Worship involves responding to God's gracious acts with words of praise and gratitude, with gifts which acknowledge that one's livelihood has come from God, and with lives dedicated to God's service. Paul reasoned that if Christ died for the ungodly, who deserved to die, then those delivered from death by Christ's sacrifice should give their lives in service to Him since they no



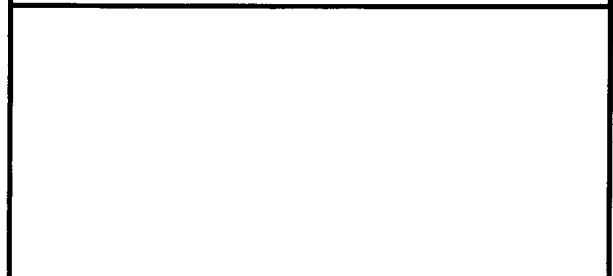
In worship--

To stand symbolizes acknowledgement of God's _____.

To bow the head symbolizes _____.

To close the eyes symbolizes that relationship to God is _____.

(presence, humility, spiritual)



Outward acts of worship include:

(devotion, rites, ceremonies)

Worship involves responding to God with _____ of praise and gratitude, _____ acknowledging God's blessings, _____ dedicated to His service.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

longer belong to themselves (see 2 Cor. 5:14-15). True worship is man's becoming aware of God's gifts, his determining how he will live in the light of God's gifts and love, and his decision or commitment to live in relationship with God.

Theological Foundations for Worship

What man believes determines the manner in which he worships.³ If God is viewed as an idea, the person will seek to worship Him through intellectual understanding or reasoning. If God is believed to be a personal being, the worshipper will seek a personal relationship with Him. Worship is based on theology, and theology is an expression of what one believes about God.

The doctrine of creation

The doctrine of creation infers that man as creature is obligated to and dependent upon his Creator. His obligation and dependence are expressed in worship. Although man has a strong desire to be free, he cannot escape his dependence on and obligation to God who has given him life and all of the provisions for sustaining it. Sin is the result of one's living as if he has no responsibility to his Creator. Worship is man's recognition of the greatness and benevolence of God.

The doctrine of creation includes the nature of man. Materialists view man as a biological being whose life is no more than the functioning of physical organs. The Bible does not deny man's relation to material existence; neither does it limit him to the physical realm. God created him from the dust of the earth; that is, He made man a material being. In addition, the Bible states that God made man in His own image. This statement means that God gave to man the capacity for fellowship with his Creator who is spiritual; therefore, man is a spiritual being who is designed to relate to God who is spirit. If man attempts to live his life strictly on the level of the material, one aspect of his being is unfulfilled. Man's spiritual nature hungers for relationship with God and can be satisfied only by the experience of worship. Often man tries to satisfy his spiritual hunger with substitutes for God, but they never satisfy and do not bring stability and meaning to life. Since man is a material being, he labours six days for food to satisfy his physical nature. Since man is a spiritual being, he must set aside one day to worship God in order to bring fulfilment to his spiritual nature and satisfy his spiritual hunger.

³ See Franklin M. Segler, *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), pp. 57-75.

The doctrine of creation infers that man is obligated to and dependent on his

_____.

Man expresses his obligation and dependence in _____.

(Creator, worship)

To be created in the image of God means that man has the capacity for fellowship with his

C _____.

Man is a spiritual being who is intended to relate to his God who is s _____.

(Creator, spirit)

Man's eternity is based on his spiritual rather than material nature. To deny his spiritual nature and to neglect his responsibility to God is to face death since the material will not sustain him eternally. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. . . . For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:4b, 10b).

Dependent man cannot avoid confronting his responsibility to God who created him. He will respond in one of two ways: he will attempt to ignore God, or he will turn to Him in submission and worship. The one who seeks to worship God can approach Him without fear because of God's mercy and forgiveness which are made available to man in the death of Christ. Although man is no longer afraid to seek the presence of God, he approaches God in awe and reverence because of the greatness of his Creator. The perceptive worshipper takes seriously his privilege of standing in the presence of the living God. When Isaiah became aware of God's presence, he heard the seraphim crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). Redeemed man never ceases to be amazed that the great God of power and glory offers Himself to sinful man in fellowship.

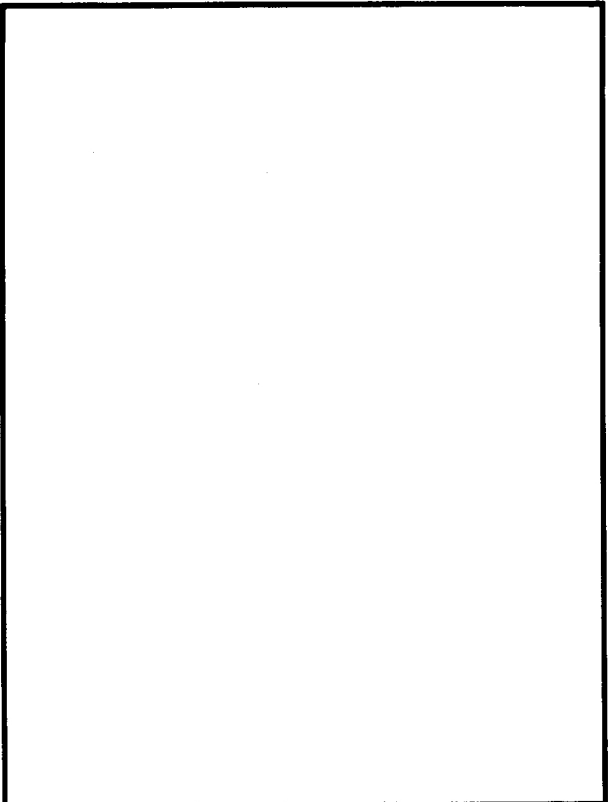
The redemptive work of Christ

Theology puts man's knowledge of God into statements which can be communicated. Worship is based on man's knowledge of God's glory and love. God has made Himself known in history. God's most complete revelation was in Jesus Christ who died on the cross. The sacrificial death of Christ reveals the depth of God's love for sinful man. Knowledge, through an experience of God's redeeming love in Christ, results in a response of worship.

Redemption makes man doubly obligated to God. The man who has failed to live up to his obligation to God as Creator is given a second chance to experience divine blessings and eternal life. This second chance is not based on man's merit but rather on God's love and grace: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Worship based on man's grateful response to God's love excludes superstition. The worshipper does not attempt to manipulate God through a type of magical deception but responds to what God has done for him in the sacrifice of Christ by offering his own life in obedience, service, and praise.

Christian worship focuses on the life, death, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ. As previously stated, Christ's death demonstrates God's love, and His resurrection and return are the basis of man's hope. The Lord's Supper is an important ritual in worship since it depicts



The sacrificial death of Christ reveals the depth of God's _____ for sinful _____.

To know of and experience God's redeeming love results in _____.

(love, man, worship)

Since man failed to live up to his obligation to God as Creator, redemption is his second chance to experience

divine _____ and eternal _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The worshipper who understands that God is love does not try to manipulate Him, but rather he responds to that love in

*_____,
_____, and
_____.*

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Christ's death demonstrates God's _____.

His resurrection and return are the basis of man's _____. (Compare with the text.)

the sacrificial death of Jesus and points to the return of the resurrected, reigning Lord. Baptism pictures death to the old life under the control of Satan and resurrection to a new life in the Kingdom of God (see Rom. 6:1-6).

Since God is spirit, man has difficulty worshipping Him without turning to idolatry. Man's five senses are designed to relate him to the material, but he has no physical sense by which to apprehend the spiritual realm. Man does have a spiritual sense, "a sense of the presence of God," but it is so overshadowed by his physical senses that often he attempts to reduce all relationships to the level of the concrete and material. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assumed human flesh and became the solution to man's problem of needing a concrete object to worship: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

During His earthly ministry, Christ was worshipped on numerous occasions by persons whose needs were met by Him (see Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25, etc.). The disciples worshipped Him after His resurrection (Matt. 28:17). Paul interpreted the ascension of Jesus as God's exaltation of Him and the giving to Him—

a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11)

Since the ascended Lord is no longer present in concrete form as an object of worship, some have turned to images and relics which represent Him. However, a lifeless image can never portray Christ whose real essence is in His spiritual being rather than the physical form He assumed as Jesus of Nazareth. Unfortunately, the images receive the adoration due Christ, and relics elicit superstitious responses. The solution to man's need of a non-material reality in worship is the Holy Spirit.

God's personal presence

God's personal presence comes to man as the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that where two or three are gathered in His name He would be in their midst (Matt. 18:20). Undoubtedly, He had reference to His spiritual presence. According to Romans 8:9-10, the presence of the indwelling Christ is the same as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Since God is present in the person of the Spirit, successful worship involves awareness of the Spirit's presence and submission to His leadership. During the experience of genuine worship, the Holy Spirit leads invisibly and works in the hearts of men. The Spirit convinces men of their guilt by making them aware of sin,

The solution to man's problem of needing a concrete object to worship is Jesus Christ, God's Son, who assumed _____.

(human flesh)

Images are ineffective in worship because:

- 1. They can never portray Christ who is _____.*
- 2. The images receive the adoration due _____, and they elicit _____.*

(1. spiritual; 2. Christ, superstition)

Successful worship involves awareness of the Spirit's _____ and submission to His _____.

(presence, leadership)

righteousness, and judgement (see John 16:8). He works in the hearts of Christians to make Christ and His teachings clear (see John 16:14-15).

The Word of God

The Bible as the Word of God should be central in worship services. In the Old Testament, God made His Word known to the prophets who, in turn, proclaimed it to the people. This revealed and proclaimed Word was recorded in the Bible. God's highest revelation came in His Son who was the Incarnate Word. The Gospels record the teachings and describe the activities of Jesus as the Christ. The Epistles interpret the meaning of Christ's teachings. The apostles who interpreted the life and ministry of Christ were inspired by the Spirit of God. The Bible contains God's promises and words of truth concerning man's life and destiny. Its message is central in the worship experience, and it is the normal means by which God speaks to man today.

As the worship service focuses on the Word of God, the Spirit uses the scripture reading and the preacher's comments to bring enlightenment and insight to the understanding of the worshipper. The worship experience is complete when the worshipper submits to the truth which is revealed to him through Scripture and is made personal by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit guides the prophet in the interpretation of Scripture, and He guides the listener by illuminating his understanding of God's message.

Without worship, knowledge of God's acts in Christ remains impersonal and rationalistic. Without knowledge, worship becomes superstition. Worship based on knowledge which is derived from an experience of God's redeeming love becomes an experience of conscious communion with God.

Worship in the Old Testament

Worship outside Israel

Primitive history indicates that all people worshipped something; most worshipped objects of nature. Worship is what distinguishes man from all other created beings.

The Tower of Babel, which is mentioned in Genesis 11:1-4, has been identified by scholars as a Babylonian ziggurat. It served as one of the temples for the deities in Mesopotamia. A record of the building of the ziggurat (dated about 2000 B.C.) depicts the king in an attitude of prayer, with angels flying above him and carrying vases from which water is flowing. He appears to be thanking his god for the gift of water. A well-equipped kitchen, which is dedicated to the moon goddess, stands in the sacred area around the ziggurat. Its fireplace for boiling water and brick table for cutting up the carcass of an

<p><i>The Bible should be central in worship because it is the normal means by which God _____ to _____.</i></p> <p><i>(speaks, man)</i></p>
<p><i>The Spirit guides the _____ in the interpretation of Scripture.</i></p> <p><i>The Spirit guides the _____ by illuminating his understanding of God's message.</i></p> <p><i>(prophet, listener)</i></p>
<p><i>What distinguishes man from other created beings? _____</i></p> <p><i>(Compare your answer with the text.)</i></p>
<p><i>The Tower of Babel was a Babylonian _____.</i></p> <p><i>(ziggurat)</i></p>

animal indicate that temple worship consisted of sacrificing an animal and cooking its flesh for a meal to be shared among the gods, priests, and worshippers.

Dagon was the Mesopotamian grain-god as early as 2500 B.C. Ishtar was the goddess of love who descended to the underworld annually to seek her young husband Tammuz, who was the god of plants and was resurrected annually (see Ezek. 8:14). Worship was expressed in annual rituals which depicted Ishtar's resurrection (the arrival of spring). In lower Mesopotamia, Marduk was a type of sun-god who carried prayers to heaven. Abraham was instructed to depart from his father's house in that country, and his departure reflects a rejection of the worship of his father's gods.

In Egypt, the land of Israel's captivity, gods were thought of as manifesting themselves as animals (rams, lionesses, bulls, cows, hawks, vultures, ibises, cobras, and other creatures). Apparently these beasts were not worshipped for their animal qualities but for the human powers and characteristics they possessed. Some gods were composite beings: Knummu had a man's body and a ram's head; Thoth, god of learning, bore the head of the ibis. The sun-god was exalted in the fourteenth century in a movement towards monotheism. The priest bowed before the sun-god Aton and chanted words of praise and acknowledgement of his role as creator of life.

Fertility cults were common to Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt. The religion of the Canaanites was rooted in a worship of cultic pillars and cones, which were associated with sex in many lands of the Eastern Mediterranean. El was the greatest of the Canaanite gods and was regarded as the creator who controlled storms and weather. His consort was the goddess Asherah who is mentioned in the Bible. The great figure of the Pantheon was Baal, the storm-god and king of the gods. He was known among the Phoenicians as "lord of heaven." In one myth, Baal was slain by monsters and carried to the land of death (Mot). After his death, all life on earth languished. Then his virgin sister Anath found Mot, killed him in a fierce battle, and cut up his body with a sword. According to one ancient myth, "in the fire she burned him, in the mill she ground him, and in the fields she sowed him." Here the body of a god is identified with the grain which is successively reaped, thrashed, ground into flour, and baked into bread. Fertility goddesses played important roles among the Canaanites. In addition to fertility rituals, there are indications (from the many sacrificial bones) that animals were offered just as in Mosaic rituals. Cultic high places were built on mountains where festival dining halls and offering tables were built for serving the gods.

Match by drawing lines from the names to the types of gods.

Dagon	god of plants
Ishtar	grain-god
Tammuz	sun-god
Marduk	goddess of love

(Dagon--grain-god, Ishtar--goddess of love, Tammuz--god of plants, Marduk--sun-god)

Is this statement true or false?

Apparently other religions offered animals just as in Mosaic rituals.

(true)

The types of gods of Israel's neighbours reveal that worship grew out of a combination of needs and lewd desires. Sacrifices were offered and rituals performed to satisfy the whims of nature gods and goddesses. The form of worship conformed to the nature of the god. Oftentimes the gods were depicted as immoral and indulgent beings; consequently, the worship of them took the form of immoral and lewd activities. Israel was prohibited from worshipping after the manner of her neighbours.

It appears that the earliest worship was expressed in activities rather than words. Praise of the deity was expressed by leaping, dancing, and shouting. Sacrifice was an inevitable feature of most early religions. The principal form of early sacrifice was a meal—to eat together indicates friendship. The first sacrifices were food and drink, part of which was eaten or drunk by the worshipper and the remainder devoted to the deity. The worship of fertility gods and goddesses usually took the form of sexual orgies. Gods created by man were conceived of as condoning man's sinful desires, and the worship of them corresponded to the conceived nature of the false gods. The nature of the god determines the nature of the worship of his devotees.

Worship in Israel

Worship is evident in the experience of Adam who walked with God in the Garden of Eden. Cain and Abel brought offerings to their God. Sacrifices were used to effect communion between the worshipper and his God, to secure God's aid, to atone for sin, and to express thanksgiving to God for His loving and merciful acts. After the flood, Noah built an altar to the Lord and selected representatives of every clean beast for sacrifices to the Lord (Gen. 8:20). The Lord responded to this act of worship by vowing never again to destroy the earth because of man's sin.

Wherever God appeared to Abraham, he built an altar and worshipped Him (see Gen. 12:7; 22:9; etc.). Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem, to express his gratitude for the victory given him over the four eastern kings who had invaded the area and taken Lot captive. The interesting story of Abraham's testing by God, who required him to offer up his son Isaac, reflects that the form of worship was offering a burnt sacrifice (see Gen. 22:2). When God appeared to Jacob in his dream of a ladder reaching up into heaven, Jacob responded by recognizing the awesomeness of the place; he built an altar for worship and called it Bethel (house of God).

Instructions for worship were given to Moses at Mount Sinai. The Israelites were not to use images of God or idols in their worship (Exod. 20:5). Moses was instructed to build a sanctuary or "tent of meeting." Eventually the tent was replaced by the tabernacle, and con-

Israel's neighbours worshipped to satisfy their _____ and lewd _____. The form of worship conformed to the nature of the _____ and often was lewd and _____.

(needs, desires, god, immoral)

Underline the correct word.

Earliest worship was expressed in (words, activities).

(activities)

List four reasons sacrifices were offered.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

gregational worship was institutionalized (see Exod. 25-26). Aaron and his sons were set apart for the priesthood, and detailed instructions were given to them for carrying on the ritual of the tabernacle (see Exod. 28-30). The tabernacle was placed in the centre of the camp and was used in the complex sacrificial system. It represented the presence of God dwelling in the midst of His people. The Ark was the most sacred and significant feature of the sanctuary. The Tables of the Covenant were placed inside the Ark, and the Mercy Seat was placed on the lid of the Ark. The Laws of the Covenant in the Ark symbolized Israel's responsibility to obey God. The invisible Presence occupied the Mercy Seat. Sinful man was required to keep the Laws of the Covenant, but his hope was in the mercy of God who forgave him when he failed. On the great Day of Atonement, the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat to symbolize that the Holy God accepted sinful man on the basis of his atoning sacrifices.

David conquered the Jebusites who had continued to occupy Jerusalem until his day. He set up the first altar for the worship of Yahweh there (see 2 Sam. 24:25) and made plans for building a house for his God, but it became his son Solomon's responsibility to carry out the plans. Worship reached its climax in the elaborate and magnificent Temple constructed by Solomon in Jerusalem. During its dedication, the house was filled with a cloud which represented the glory and presence of God. This Temple became the central sanctuary of Israel. Numerous vessels were used in the symbolic worship of the Temple. The table for the bread of the Presence symbolized God's provision for His people. The lampstands and their lamps of pure gold symbolized God's guidance for His people. The altar of incense was used when the priest approached the Divine Presence.

Numerous festivals were included in Israel's ritualistic worship. The Passover was observed annually by citizens in Jerusalem and by pilgrims who journeyed there to participate in the slaying of the lamb and the eating of unleavened bread. This celebration was a memorial to God's delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage. The Passover was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It included the eating of unleavened cakes, the offering of first-fruits, and the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits. This feast expressed gratitude to God who had blessed the land with the forthcoming harvest. The Feast of Booths was a festival of thanksgiving which included the use of lights and dancing. The Israelites lived in booths seven days and celebrated the new year. Prayers were offered for the coming of the rains.

Frequently, the prophets rebuked the Israelites for their empty ritualism and mixed motives in worship.

The Ark contained the Laws of the Covenant which symbolized Israel's responsibility to _____ God.

The Mercy Seat on the lid of the Ark was occupied by the invisible P_____ and symbolized Israel's hope was in God's m_____.

(obey, Presence, mercy)

Match by drawing lines from the Israelite feasts to the aspects of worship they expressed.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>1. Passover</i> | <i>a. gratitude for God's blessings</i> |
| <i>2. Unleavened Bread</i> | <i>b. memorial for God's deliverance</i> |
| <i>3. Booths</i> | <i>c. thanksgiving</i> |

(1--b, 2.--a, 3--c)

Hosea conveyed God's message: "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (6:6). Micah gave a similar message:

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? . . . Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (6:6-8, RSV)

Reference has been made already to Isaiah's experience of worship which is recorded in the sixth chapter of his prophecy.

The Book of Psalms contains many songs of praise which were used in temple worship. Its themes are thanksgiving, penance, petition, and praise. The Psalms express man's faith and dependence upon the Lord.

Worship in the New Testament

Christian worship in New Testament times centred in baptism, preaching, and the Lord's Supper. These activities were adaptations of Jewish practices. Included in worship were public prayers, songs, scripture readings, instruction, and private devotions. Jewish Christians continued at first to participate in the worship at the Temple and the synagogues. As late as the last visit of Paul to Jerusalem in A.D. 57, Christian Jews were still observing some of the rituals of Judaism. After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, new modes of worship arose.

The synagogues, which had originated in the third century B.C., had greater influence on Christian practices than the Temple. The synagogue buildings were plain and the services were simple. They were initially established as institutions of teaching but later were used as places of worship by Jews who could not go frequently to Jerusalem. The worship services were less formal. They emphasized teaching, and priestly leaders and activities were less prominent. Scriptures were read and interpreted, songs were sung, the Ten Commandments and benedictions were quoted, and prayers were given. These practices were followed in early Christian worship. Eventually reading from the Epistles of Paul and the Gospels took precedence over reading from the Law and the Prophets. The Psalms continued to be used as hymns of praise (see Eph. 5:18-19).

According to the Book of Acts, a fellowship meal was part of the worship service. It is uncertain how often the Lord's Supper was observed. The author of Acts notes that the new disciples continued together in the study of

List the activities that were central in New Testament worship.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Worship in the New Testament differed from Old Testament worship several ways:

- 1. The synagogues were more prominent than the _____.*
- 2. The services were less _____.*
- 3. The emphasis was more on teaching than on the priestly _____ and their activities.*

(1. Temple, 2. formal, 3. leaders)

the apostles' teachings, in fellowship, in breaking of bread (a love feast or the Lord's Supper), and in prayer (see Acts 2:42). Paul indicates that it was customary for Christians to give offerings in public worship (see 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; etc.).

Later Historical Developments

The purpose of looking at worship in history is to discover beneficial and detrimental practices. An examination of Clement's personal letter to the Church of Corinth, written about A.D. 96, reveals that worship included reading from the Word of God, confession of sins, acknowledgement of the presence of the Holy Spirit, acknowledgement of salvation in Jesus Christ, and proclamation of the Word of God. Apparently, hymns were sung and prayers were offered. Justin Martyr's *Apology*, written about A.D. 140, gives the first outline of worship. It includes: Scripture reading, address by the president, prayer, thanksgiving and the "amen" by the people, distribution of the bread and wine, and collection for the poor. At that time, there seems to have been much freedom in worship.

During the third and fourth centuries, worship took on a greater degree of formalism. Formalism evolved in connection with the development of the doctrines of sacramentalism (sacraments necessary for salvation) and sacerdotalism (powers of the priest). During the fifth century and following, magic and superstition in worship became evident to a greater degree. These resulted primarily from the conversion to Christianity of pagan tribes of northern Europe who brought many pagan superstitions into Christian worship. Relics of Christian martyrs were thought to have supernatural powers. In the western Roman Catholic Church, symbolism became literal as worship centred in the observance of the mass, the "unbloody sacrifice" of Christ. The Supper was now considered to be a sacrament (containing the power of salvation). The destiny of the soul was considered to be under the control of the priest who consecrated the mass and the baptismal waters (a development called sacerdotalism). The worship of the Virgin Mary was developing. By the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that the substance of bread and wine were turned into the body and blood of Christ) was complete.

The Reformation brought various changes in the forms of worship. The Lutheran and Anglican churches dispensed with the doctrine of transubstantiation but continued to make the Lord's Supper central in the worship experience. Although the elements were not thought to be changed into the actual body and blood of Christ, the real

List five elements of worship around the end of the first century.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

During the Middle Ages,

1. M _____ and s _____ became more evident in worship.
2. Symbolism became l _____ in worship.
3. The destiny of the soul was considered to be under the control of the p _____.
4. The worship of the Virgin M _____ was developing.

(1. Magic, superstition; 2. literal; 3. priest; 4. Mary)

presence of Christ was believed to be in the elements. A more moderate reform was brought about by John Calvin and has been perpetuated by Presbyterian and Reformed groups. Calvin did not go as far as Zwingli in considering the Supper to be a mere memorial or symbol. He disagreed with Luther in holding that the real presence of Christ was in the bread and wine, but he taught that Christians experience the real presence of Christ when they partake of the elements. Another group of reformers, known as the Radical Reformers, attempted to restore the primitive New Testament order; therefore, they dispensed with many of the practices in favour of an unstructured approach. The preaching of the Word, the participation of the congregation, and the singing of hymns by the congregation were emphasized. The Lord's Supper was observed as a memorial, and some of the participants sat around a table in an attempt to return to New Testament practices. This approach to worship has been perpetuated by Baptists and other "free churches." These churches insist on being free from traditional rites and ceremonies in order to emphasize the Spirit which appeals to the souls of men. There has been some concern that free churches, especially in America, have over-reacted to liturgy. An emphasis on evangelism has resulted in the evangelistic sermon's becoming the central part of the worship in place of liturgy.

In an evaluation of present forms of worship, the student should consider carefully the biblical patterns of worship in the Temple and the synagogues. In addition, he should profit from a knowledge of worship patterns from the first century to the present. He should not accept forms of worship simply because they are traditional or different but because they are meaningful ways for people to relate to God. A knowledge of history should induce caution concerning those forms which can become perverted and idolatrous.

The term "free churches" refers to those churches which insist on being _____ from traditional rites and ceremonies in order to emphasize the _____ which appeals to the _____ of men.

(free, Spirit, souls)

Home Study Exercise

Basic assignment (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the material in the study guide, answer the following questions.

1. According to Noss, what is the basis of all religions? _____

2. Why does man worship? _____
3. Give the meaning of each of the following:
 - (1) worship _____
 - (2) *shahah* _____
 - (3) *proskuneō* _____
4. Give Paul's definition of worship. _____
5. Briefly describe worship as personal relationship. _____

6. Explain how worship is a dialogue. _____

7. Why do congregations usually stand with bowed heads during prayer? _____
8. Name three outward acts of worship. _____

9. Briefly state why worship is based upon the doctrines of creation, redemption, and God's continuing grace. _____

10. Why is God's image in man basic to worship _____

11. How does one's belief about God's nature affect his worship? _____

12. Why does Christian worship focus on the cross, the resurrection, and the return of Christ? _____

13. What is the solution to man's need of a concrete object to worship, and why are images ineffective in worship?

14. Why should the Bible be central in worship services? _____

15. What was the Tower of Babel? _____

16. What was the reason for worship among Israel's neighbours, and what was the primary form of their worship?

17. When did sacrificial worship begin among Israel's ancestors? _____

18. What was the significance of the Ark of the Covenant in worship? _____

19. List three annual feasts in Israel and an aspect of worship expressed by each. _____

20. What three activities were central in New Testament worship? _____

21. How did New Testament worship differ from Old Testament worship? _____

22. List five elements of worship at the end of the first century A.D. _____

23. List four errors in worship during the Middle Ages. _____

24. Why are some churches referred to as “free churches”?

Supplementary assignment (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 13–32 in *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice* by Franklin Segler and answer the following questions.

1. Give five evidences supporting the view that worship is a part of man's nature.
2. How did Israel's worship differ from that of other nations?
3. Give the characteristics of worship at the time of each of the following: (1) Patriarchs, (2) Moses, (3) Judges, (4) Kings, (5) Prophets and Psalms.
4. What evidence is there that Christian worship is rooted in the Jewish manner of worship?
5. Describe the differences in temple and synagogue worship.
6. Name the distinctive features of early Christian worship.

Advanced assignment (Level 3). Read pages 4–12 in Segler's book and answer the following questions.

1. Why does man worship?
2. What does Segler mean by the statement, “Worship is both revelation and mystery”?
3. Explain how worship is celebration, life, dialogue, and giving.
4. What is required for reality in worship?

Optional assignment. Read chapter 3, pages 33–56, in Segler's book and answer the following questions.

1. Give the date of the earliest departure from the New Testament mode of baptism, and describe the suggested new mode.
2. In what ways do you consider the instructions concerning the Lord's Supper in the *Didachē* to differ in emphasis from the New Testament?
3. Describe the defects which developed in worship during the mediaeval period.
4. Name and evaluate the weakness of free church reform and worship.

Seminar Discussion

1. What are the weaknesses of free church worship?
2. What are the weaknesses of liturgical worship?
3. Do free churches follow the New Testament pattern of worship?
4. How were temple and synagogue worship different? Which does your church follow?
5. What place should preaching have in worship? Support your views from the New Testament.